

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-5 to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) In a two-piece joining device for sheet pile retaining walls, which comprises two interlocking, strip-shaped joining elements for connecting two adjacent individual sheet piling elements of the sheet pile retaining walls, e.g., a ~~sheet piling~~, which are to be pile-driven in each case, ~~the~~ having (a) a first joining element being affixable with a base to ~~the first~~ an individual first sheet piling element and comprising (1) a neck strip projecting away from the base and the individual first sheet piling element and (2) an adjoining button strip, and ~~the~~ (b) a second joining element being affixable with a base to ~~another~~ an individual second sheet piling element and comprising two hook strips projecting away from the base and the individual second sheet piling element, which define between them a hollow space and at least partially encompass the button strip of the first joining element so that it is held in the hollow space, the improvement wherein the base of the first joining element comprises, on its two longitudinal sides, ~~at least at some~~

points, holding portions projecting away from the base, which at least partially embrace the outer sides of the hook strips of the second joining element at least partly and prevent a widening of the hook strips in the case of tensile forces between the two individual sheet piling elements.

2. (Currently Amended) A two-piece joining device according to claim 1, wherein the holding portions are holding strips.

3. (Currently Amended) A two-piece joining device according to claim 1, wherein the first joining element with its base extends between two ends, and wherein the holding portions extend substantially continuously along the entire length of the base of the first joining element from one end thereof to the other.

4. (Currently Amended) A two-piece joining device according to claim 1, wherein the hook strips of the second joining element are each provided with a button strip each on their ends and wherein the holding portions of the first joining element at least partially encompass these button strips at least partly.

5. (Currently Amended) A two-piece joining device according to claim 1, wherein the joining elements are extruded steel profiles.